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Presbyterianism

A Heritage *and a* Challenge

A Text Book on Presbyterianism

BY

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Foreword

THIS little book offers a clear, forceful, interesting discussion of the origin, government and distinctive doctrines of our great Church. It is not intended to be exhaustive, but has been prepared especially as a text-book for Seniors (15-16-17) and Young People (18-24).

The style and content make it a fascinating, practical and suggestive text-book. Young People who study it will assuredly want to go even more thoroughly into the heritage and challenge of Presbyterianism.

A. B. B.

A Heritage

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CHAPTER I.

A heritage is always a challenge. Esau had a wonderful heritage in his birthright, and it ought to have been a challenge to the best that was in him, but he despised it and sold it for a mess of pottage. Perhaps he did not understand the full meaning of his birthright and therefore did not appreciate it. Afterwards he saw his mistake and sought with tears to remedy it, but it was too late.

You and I have a noble heritage in our Presbyterianism, and it ought to be a challenge to the best that is in us, but it may be that we do not understand how great a heritage we have, and like Esau, we may be in danger of neglecting or even despising it. The purpose of this little sketch is to help us to see something of the origin, nature and history of Presbyterianism, so that we may appreciate more fully this glorious heritage which has come down to us through the centuries.

The Name—Its Origin and Meaning

I wonder if all of you know just where and how we got the name Presbyterian. We got it out of the New Testament. That may surprise you, as you have been reading your Bible with more or less diligence for a good many years and cannot recall having seen the word Presbyterian in it. However, we must remember that the New Testament was not originally written in English but in Greek. When we turn to the Greek Testament we find the word "Presbyteros" occurring frequently. While that is Greek it sounds very much like English, and very much like the word Presbyterian, doesn't it?

Well, in a sense it is English. We, English speaking people, in dealing with that Greek word Presbyteros sometimes translate it and sometimes transliterate it. When we transliterate it we get the word Presbyter, and when we translate it we get the word "Elder." So, Presbyter and Elder are one and the same. It is from this word "Presbyter," which means an Elder, that we get our name Presbyterian. In short, a Presbyterian Church is a church which is governed by elders.

Its History

Now, if you will read your New Testament with this point in mind you will see that the New Testament Church was governed by elders. You will also observe that these elders are at times called bishops,

and that elders and bishops are identical in the New Testament. A fine illustration of this is found in the 20th chapter of Acts, where Paul sends for the elders of Ephesus, and where in verse 17 they are called elders and in verse 28 (Revised Version) they are called bishops.

In other words the New Testament Church was a Presbyterian Church. It was governed by elders and had a representative form of government. Our representative form of government is one of the things we Presbyterians glory in. We glory in it because we believe it is thoroughly scriptural and because we believe it has done great things for the Church and for the world. As it happens to fall to my lot to teach Church History and to spend a large part of my time in reading and studying Church History, I hope that it will not prove tedious to you if I illustrate what I am talking about from the pages of Church History.

The Rise of the Pope

The New Testament Church was governed by elders, sometimes called bishops, who were chosen by the people. Under this representative form of government the New Testament Church was a missionary church and a church of great spiritual power. But it is very difficult to keep a representative form of government. The human heart is as prone to autocracy as the sparks are to fly upward. Very soon after the

Apostolic days we see one of these elders, or bishops, in a church rising above the others and he is called "the bishop." At first "the bishop" was parochial and had authority only in the local congregation. But very soon "the bishop" in important centers began to exercise authority over whole groups of churches, and we have the diocesan bishop. A few centuries later the bishops in the five great centers, Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, were known as patriarchs, or "fathers," and ruled over large areas. Then came a contest extending over centuries as to which of these should be greatest. The patriarch, or father, of Rome won out and he became known as "the father," the (Italian) papa, the pope. This was pretty well accomplished by 400 A. D. By these steps and by a gradual process the representative form of church government found in the New Testament was transformed into the most complete and absolute autocracy that the church or the world has ever known. For more than a thousand years practically the whole church was in the grip of this autocracy, and representative government practically perished from the face of the earth.

The Reformation

Then came Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther laid his greatest emphasis upon doctrines, especially those fundamental doctrines known as justification by faith and the universal priest-

hood of believers, but Martin Luther did not lay large emphasis upon Church government. It remained for John Calvin, in the little city of Geneva, between the years 1536 and 1564, in addition to formulating a great system of doctrine which bears his name, to lead a great movement back to the Bible to discover and resurrect the form of Church government set forth in that long neglected Book. As he studied this subject he found that the New Testament Church had a form of representative government and was governed by elders who were chosen by the people. This was enough for John Calvin, for to him the Bible was the final authority, not only in doctrine, but in government, and in everything else. So John Calvin and his colleagues adopted the Presbyterian form of government for the Reformed Church in Geneva.

Autocracy vs. Democracy

It is difficult for us who live in these days of freedom and democracy to understand what a new and mighty force was thus set in motion in Geneva. To understand we will have to remember that in John Calvin's day the world was ruled by absolute monarchs who believed in the divine right of kings but not in the rights of the people, and that the church was ruled by an absolute autocrat who believed in his own infallibility and who claimed the right not only to rule the church with absolutely autocratic power, but to crown and uncrown kings—in short to rule the church and the world.

It was into a church and a world like this that John Calvin introduced the scriptural teaching that the New Testament Church was governed by elders, and that the people had the right to elect their own elders, ministers, and deacons. In brief, he turned loose in the church and in the world an idea that was full of dynamite for autocracy of every kind, the idea of representative self-government. That idea was carried to France, Holland, Scotland, England, North Ireland, and other lands. Wherever it went it came into conflict with tyranny in the church and in the state. Wherever men became Presbyterians they became imbued with the idea that one of their divine and inalienable rights was the right of self-government, and they stood ready to fight and to die if need be for civil and religious liberty.

"No Bishop, No King"

For abundant illustrations verifying this statement we only need to turn to the history of the Presbyterian Huguenots in France, the Dutch Presbyterians in Holland, the followers of John Knox in Scotland, the Scotch Presbyterians in the North of Ireland, and the English Presbyterians. The autocratic King James I of England, who had abundant opportunity to observe Scotch Presbyterianism in action, understood all this clearly, and crystallized his convictions in two re-

markable sayings which have lived on throughout the years. His first saying was, "No bishop, no king." His idea was that if you take absolute monarchy out of the church it will soon come out of the state. His second saying was, "A Scottish Presbytery agreeth with the monarchy as God with the Devil." In other words, if you let the church have representative self-government it will not be long until the state will have it and the king must go.

The Founder of America

Nowhere in all history is the truth that I am trying to state so finely illustrated as in our own country. Ranke, the German historian, says: "John Calvin was the virtual founder of America." Dr. James Macdonald, of Canada, has written a charming book entitled, "The North American Idea." According to his definition the North American idea is this: "The Right of a Free People to Govern Themselves." And, pray tell me where did the people of North America get that idea? They got it from the Presbyterians, and the Presbyterians got it from John Calvin, and John Calvin got it from the Bible.

There were about 3,000,000 people in the American Colonies when the Declaration of Independence was made. Nearly two-thirds of these were Calvinists, and nearly one-third were of Scotch and Scotch Irish Presbyterian descent. These Presbyterians had been

brought up in the School of Liberty. They had learned the right of self-government in the church, they carried it over into the state. Their battle cry was "no taxation without representation." It was liberty or death with them.

Written into Our Constitution

When the Revolutionary War was over and independence had been won and our forefathers went to write the Constitution of the United States they never got away from their Presbyterian training, but wrote these Presbyterian ideas of representative self-government into our Constitution. The similarity between the underlying principles of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church and the Constitution of the United States is so marked that one might suppose that the Presbyterians had copied their Constitution from the Constitution of the United States, if the Presbyterian Constitution had not been written about one hundred and fifty years before the Constitution of the United States.

Still at Work

The end of this North American, Presbyterian, Idea, is not yet. It is still at work. When the nations were aflame with war and people were asking what it was all about, it was Woodrow Wilson, our own Scotch-Irish, Presbyterian, President, the son of a Presbyter-

ian minister, who gave the answer. He told us that it was a fight to the death against all forms of autocracy and to make the world safe for democracy. Where did he get that idea? It was the idea that John Calvin resurrected from his Bible about four centuries ago and turned loose in the city of Geneva and in the world. See how it has grown and transformed the world in these four centuries, and the end is not yet. Perhaps its greatest victories are still in the future. It is at least significant that President Wilson's League of Nations which is wrestling with this idea, not for a nation, but for the world, should have as its meeting place the Reformation Hall in John Calvin's City of Geneva.

We got our name Presbyterian from the New Testament. The Presbyterian Church is a church which is governed by elders who are chosen by the people. It stands for representative self-government. This brief survey of Presbyterian history shows what tremendous things this idea has wrought for the church and for the world during the past four hundred years.

An Exhortation

Let me pause here for a moment of exhortation. The New Testament Church started out with a simple, representative system of self-government. In a very few years after the last of the Apostles had died the church began to drift away from this representative

form of government towards a more autocratic form, and within a few centuries the church was in the grip of the most autocratic and complex form of government that the world has ever known. One generation has about as much human nature as another, and sometimes more, and it is just as possible for the church of to-day to drift away from her representative form of self-government as it was for the early church to drift. My exhortation is, let no church, or men, or group of men take your crown from you. Representative self-government is one of the fundamental principles of the Presbyterian Church. The people have the inalienable right to elect their own ministers, elders, and deacons. Our forefathers purchased this right with their blood and their lives. Let us prepare ourselves for this right and for this duty and let us perform it with the fear of God in our hearts. Let us not only hold to the principle of representative self-government, but let us stand for every measure that will help our church attain to a most nearly perfect form of representative self-government, for this is the scriptural form of government.

For Discussion.

1. What is the origin and meaning of the word Presbyterian?
2. How did the New Testament Church with its government by elders develop into the Roman Catholic Church which is governed by the pope, cardinals and bishops?

3. Summarize the religious background at the time of the Reformation.
4. Upon what did Martin Luther lay his greatest emphasis?
5. What was John Calvin's contribution?
6. Discuss the spread of the idea of representative government in church and state.

Our Doctrinal Heritage

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CHAPTER II.

Tremendous Emphasis Placed on Doctrine.

WHILE the Presbyterian Church gets her name from her form of government, which has accomplished so much for human liberty, she is, after all, even more noted for her doctrines than for her form of government. It is not an exaggeration to say that no other denomination lays so much emphasis upon doctrine. Nor has any other denomination such a clearly defined and logical system of doctrine. John Calvin, who went beneath the accumulated rubbish and superstitions of ages, and rediscovered the Presbyterian system of government and doctrine in the Holy Scriptures, and thus became the modern founder or discoverer of Presbyterianism, placed tremendous emphasis on doctrine. He was the outstanding theologian of the Reformation period. In fact, he is one of the two or three really great theologians since the days of the Apostle Paul. At the age of twenty-six he issued the first edition of his theology, known as Calvin's Institutes. It was the sensation of the hour in the theological world. Not since the days of Augustine, who lived more than a thousand years before Calvin, had there been published a book which showed

such a comprehensive grasp of the great doctrines of the Christian religion. John Calvin at once became a marked man. But he was not satisfied with his first edition, and for the next twenty-five years kept rewriting and revising it until the last edition made two large volumes, constituting the most complete and comprehensive system of theology that had ever been wrought out in the history of the Christian Church. This system from the days of the Reformation to the present time has been known as Calvinism. Presbyterians do not accept every detail of Calvin's teachings, but they do accept the main features of the system which he wrought out, and Presbyterians have a sort of holy pride in being known as Calvinists.

The Westminster Assembly

This Calvinistic system was embodied in the Huguenot Confession of Faith in France, in the Creed of the Dutch Reformed Church in Holland, and in the Scotch Confession of Faith which was made for the Presbyterian Church of Scotland by John Knox and his colleagues, but it found its most perfect expression in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, which were made by the Assembly of Westminster divines in session in Westminster Abbey in London during the years 1643 to 1648, A. D.

Our Official Creed

The Westminster Assembly was one of the most notable bodies of men that ever assembled in the history of the Christian Church. There were one hun-

dred and fifty-two members of this Assembly, the large majority of whom were Puritans and Calvinists of the highest type, men of piety and of learning. While these men were thoroughly versed in Calvinism, one of the rules of the Assembly was that nothing should be written into their Confession of Faith and Catechisms which could not be proved directly from the Holy Scriptures. This was a rule that Calvin always followed. The result is that the doctrines of the Westminster Standards are not only Calvinistic but they are also thoroughly scriptural. So if you wish to find the official creed of the Presbyterian Church today, you will not turn to the writings of John Calvin but to the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. All ministers, elders, and deacons of the Presbyterian Church are required in taking their office to declare their acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms. This is not required of private members. They are only required to make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and to live a life in keeping with that profession. But while this is true, Presbyterians lay great stress upon teaching their doctrines as set forth especially in the Shorter Catechism to the children and young people of the Church.

But it is high time to name a few of the outstanding Calvinistic doctrines for which the Presbyterian Church is especially noted. Of course Presbyterians hold in common with other evangelical denominations the great doctrines concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures, the Deity of Jesus Christ, the atonement,

regeneration, repentance, justification by faith, sanctification, adoption, and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. But I am speaking now of certain doctrines upon which Presbyterians have always laid especial emphasis. If some one were to ask you which is the first, great distinctive doctrine of the Presbyterian Church what would you say? I have an idea that you would say Predestination, and you would be mistaken.

I. The Sovereignty of God.

The Sovereignty of God is the first great doctrine of the Presbyterian Church. This doctrine is the central sun of Calvinism around which all other Calvinistic doctrines revolve. It may be expressed in the following scriptural language: "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou?" Dr. John Ker, the great Scotch theologian, used to say that Calvinism can be summed up in the five following words: "All things are of God." The Bible begins with this thought: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Our Shorter Catechism begins with the same idea: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." The exaltation of God is the keynote of Calvinism.

Our Father and our Sovereign

In these latter days Presbyterians are not preaching as much about the sovereignty of God as our fathers

did. "It has been described as the merit of Calvin's theology that it compelled men to contemplate themselves as forever standing face to face with the sovereign majesty of God." That is precisely what the fathers did in preaching Calvinism. But at present we are laying more emphasis upon the Fatherhood of God and the love of God. These two ideas of Fatherhood and Sovereignty are not in conflict; they are supplementary. In thinking of God we ought to think of Him both as our Father and our Sovereign.

Do you realize that a person's conception of God colors all his ideas of religion and determines his whole doctrinal system? Years ago a young boy out in Kentucky heard a Presbyterian minister make a statement like that and it never left him. From that day on he tried to get correct conceptions of God as He is revealed in the Scriptures. Years passed by and that boy became pastor of one of our leading churches and one of the best theologians in our whole Assembly Let us, by the study of the Bible, by prayer, and by the teachings of our Church try to get correct conceptions of God.

II. Predestination—God's Eternal Plan

Out of this doctrine of God's sovereignty flows the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. In the popular mind predestination is more closely associated with the Presbyterian Church than any other doctrine. What is predestination? In its larger sense it is God's eternal plan. Presbyterians believe that God has an eternal plan which includes the earth, heaven, and hell,

in fact the whole universe, and the life of every individual in the world that now is and in the world to come. Our Confession of Faith says that there are high mysteries connected with this doctrine and that it should be handled with prudence and care. I shall not go into these mysteries here, but shall speak of the doctrine only in its broadest outlines.

Everyday Examples

We believe that this doctrine is clearly taught in the Scriptures, and we believe that reason calls for this doctrine. Let me take a few commonplace illustrations. When a woman goes to make a new dress, how does she proceed? Does she buy a piece of cloth and then go to cutting and slashing at random. Not at all. She studies the fashion plates and decides upon the kind of dress she would like to have. Then she buys a pattern. The whole thing is clearly in her mind before she ever puts the scissors to the cloth, and then she works by the pattern.

Again, how do men proceed to erect a building? Do they begin by hauling stone and brick and lumber at random? Not at all. An architect makes a complete plan of the building before a lick is ever struck. I have before me as I write a fine illustration of this.

Just out of my window is a beautiful new building known as Schauffler Hall. It cost more than $150,000. About five years ago a noble Christian woman gave the money to Union Seminary for the purpose of erecting this building. How did the Seminary authorities proceed? Did they begin to assemble mate-

rial at random and then begin to build at random? Of course not, in fact these sound like foolish questions. A building committee was appointed, this committee selected a competent architect, and then the committee and the architect studied a great many possible plans for the building. After the most mature deliberation the committee settled upon a particular plan and asked the architect to work it out in detail. This he did with great care, planning for every possible detail of the building, so that we knew every window, every door, every room, and even every window pane. In this way we had before us the whole building complete before a lick was struck in its erection. Then we began. But even then we did not start building, but began by tearing down a building that was in the way and by making a great hole in the ground for the foundations. It looked as if we were going in the opposite direction. But after awhile the actual building began and a large number of workmen were set to work. But not a single workman knew what the building was going to look like. Each one had his task to perform on some particular section of the building. But during all that time there was one man who knew all about that building and that was the architect, for he had planned it from the beginning.

God is Working His Purpose Out

This is the way sensible men and women work. Do you suppose that a God of infinite wisdom would start to build a universe at random, without any sort of plan in his mind? It would be a terrible thing to

live in a world that was going at random. Presbyterians believe that from the beginning God has had an absolutely complete and comprehensive plan for the world and for the whole universe and for every life in it, and that he is now in his providence working out those plans. We are workmen on God's plan, each with his own specific task to do, and our horizon is so small that we cannot see the plan in its entirety. But God knows the plan and we may rest assured that it is the best plan that even the infinite mind of God could have conceived. One of these days we shall see the plan in all its completeness and we will be saying that it is an all glorious plan.

"My Father is at the Helm"

Predestination is God's Eternal Plan for His world, His universe, and His children. It is a blessed comfort in these days of chaos to know that the world is not running wild, to know that God is on the throne and that He can make even the wrath of man to praise Him.

I recall the story of a little girl in a terrible storm at sea. It looked to all on board as if the ship would go down and there were many blanched faces and much wild excitement. Amid it all the little girl maintained the greatest composure. When some one asked her how she could be so calm in the face of such danger and amid such excitement, she replied: "Why should I be frightened? My father is at the helm."

For Discussion.

1. What was John Calvin's contribution to the development of Presbyterian Theology?

2. Give dates of Westminster Assembly; its personnel; results.

3. Be prepared to discuss the outstanding doctrines of the Calvinistic system studied in this chapter—(I) The Sovereignty of God, (II) Predestination.

Our Doctrinal Heritage

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CHAPTER III.

III. Sin

All evangelical denominations believe in the doctrine of sin, but no other denomination has ever stressed it in the same way that Presbyterians have done. Believing in a great and sovereign God the Calvinist believes that sin against such a God is a terrible thing. He believes that the unregenerate sinner is dead in sins and that he has in him no power to save himself. He is not simply sick, but is spiritually dead and has no more power to save himself than a dead man has to raise himself to life. This deadness of the soul and this total spiritual inability of the unsaved is sometimes known as total depravity. Presbyterians believe that God and God alone can save..

IV. Grace—A Gift of God

This brings us to the Presbyterian view of the grace of God. There are people in these latter days who believe in salvation by education, by culture, and by character. They believe that the sinner is simply a wandering child of God's who only needs to be made conscious of his sonship and all will be well. He can do the rest. The Presbyterian Calvinist believing that we have sinned a great sin against a great God, and that we are dead in sins, believes that we can only be saved by the grace of God, and by grace we

mean the free unmerited gift of God. The Apostle Paul states this truth clearly in Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God." Did you ever notice how clearly the Bible teaches that our salvation and everything connected with it is a gracious gift of God? First of all He gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins. The Bible clearly teaches that repentance and faith are the gifts of God. The power to confess Christ is a gift. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life." In short eternal life and everything that leads up to it is an unmerited gift from God. This doctrine makes God the absolute author of salvation and leaves the saved sinner no ground for boasting. This doctrine also helps the Presbyterian to sing with a new and deeper meaning those immortal lines:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

V. Final Perseverance

Inasmuch as Christ has died for him and the Holy Spirit has regenerated him and the mighty God has saved him, the Presbyterian does not believe there is any power in earth or hell that can pluck him out of the Father's hand. He believes that Jesus Christ who has begun the good work in him will perfect it until that day. He believes that there is nothing that can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. He loves to sing Dr. George Matheson's great hymn:

"Oh love that wilt not let me go."

This is called the doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to call it the Final Preservation of the Saints. It is of great comfort to feel and to know that our heavenly Father is holding us and that He is not going to let us go.

We Must Be Worthy of Such a Love

But we must not misunderstand this doctrine and feel that it gives us liberty to live any sort of a life. A life of sin is in itself a proof that the one who lives such a life is not a true child of God. An illustration may help us here. If your mother were to put her arms around you and tell you that she loved you better than anything in all the world and that nothing could separate you from that love, would you feel like running off and falling into sin because you knew that she would love you any way? That is not the way love works. You would try all the harder to live a life that was worthy of such love.

A Mother's Love

One day a noble Christian woman who belonged to a church of which I was pastor, was taken critically ill. We sent a telegram to her son in a distant state to come at once. He hurried across the continent but he arrived too late. His mother was dead. He asked me to go alone with him into the room where his mother lay. As we stood there looking at her peaceful face he said to me: "She was the best mother that ever lived. When I left to go out west she put her arms about me and kissed me goodbye and told me how she loved me and how nothing could ever sepa-

rate me from that love. Many a time when I came face to face with some great temptation I thought of her and her love to me and it always called me back." That is the way love works. If we really believe that we are the children of God and that He loves us with an everlasting love we will try by his grace to live as the children of God ought to live.

We believe that these Presbyterian doctrines of God, of Predestination, of Sin, of Grace, and of Final Perseverance, have had much to do in developing a distinctive type of Christian men and women who have the fear of God in their hearts, but who have no fear of men. You remember those striking words of Regent Morton as he stood by the new-made grave of John Knox: "Here lieth a man who in his life never feared the face of man." This same thing could be said of many other Calvinists who have lived and died since the days of John Knox. These mighty doctrines of the Holy Scriptures, which are embodied in the Calvinistic system, made them what they were. We need more men of that type to-day, which is another way of saying that we need more men who are shot through and through with these great doctrines of the Scriptures as set forth in the Calvinistic System.

For Discussion.

1. Be prepared to discuss the outstanding doctrines of the Calvinistic system studied in this chapter—(III) Sin, (IV) Grace, (V) Final Perseverance.
2. Give practical illustrations of each.
3. Do our doctrines make a distinct type of Christian? Why?

A Challenge

CHAPTER IV.

Breadth and Narrowness

SOMETIMES the Presbyterian Church is accused of being narrow. Let us see about that. In order to become a member of the Presbyterian Church one is only required to make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior. Nothing could be broader than that. The Presbyterian Church is willing to receive a member from any other evangelical church simply on the statement from the other church that this member is in good and regular standing in that church, and there is absolutely no other requirement. The Presbyterian Church accepts as valid the baptism of any other evangelical church. The Presbyterian Church recognizes as valid the ordination of ministers in all other evangelical churches. The Presbyterian Church invites all members of all other evangelical churches to the communion table. The Presbyterian Church cordially co-operates with all other evangelical churches in Christian service. It would be difficult to think of a broader platform than this. I can think of only one other great denomination that is as broad and catholic in all these respects. It is true that the Presbyterian Church stands for a strict

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observance of the Sabbath and against all forms of worldliness and for real family religion. In these respects she might be called narrow. If so, it is a form of narrowness in which she rejoices, and a form of narrowness which the church and the world need just at this time.

Additional Characteristics

I have mentioned only a few of the outstanding distinctive characteristics of the Presbyterian Church. It is not possible to speak of all of them in a short article. I might have spoken of her simple but impressive form of service, her emphasis upon Christian education, her great missionary zeal, and her stress upon preaching. I might also have spoken more fully of her glorious history. But this is impossible within reasonable limits. However, I have said enough to show you something of the history and ideals of the church which we love. We believe that the Presbyterian Church is most like the New Testament Church in government, in worship and in her doctrines. We believe that it is the duty of every minister and every member of the Presbyterian Church to do all in his power to make the Presbyterian Church perfectly like the New Testament Church in her work, her worship, her government, her doctrines, her principles, and her ideals.

Presbyterian Pride

We Presbyterians may be pardoned if we take a kind of holy pride in the fact that we belong to a Church with such a history and with such great doc-

trines and principles. We have inherited a great birthright, let us not despise it, but let us rejoice in it. It should be a tremendous challenge to us.

The Leaders of the Past

Sallust, the Latin historian, tells us that Roman mothers used to take their children into the presence of the busts and statues of their ancestors, and recount their glorious deeds, and then exhort their children never to be content until the glories of the present were as great or even greater than those of the past. As we read the history of the Presbyterian Church and its great leaders of the past, there should come to our hearts a holy challenge not to be content until the Church of the present is as great, or even greater, than the Church of the past. This can only be accomplished by each individual member of the Church living the highest, the holiest, and the most heroic life that it is possible for him to live, strengthened by the power of the living Christ.

The Chance to Win Others

There is also a challenge to us to go out and invite others to become members of this Church, which has such an inspiring history and which has meant so much to us. We can issue this invitation in the language of Moses to Hobab the Midianite: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it unto you: Come thou with us and we will do thee good." There is a still greater invitation, and even more gracious, which we can extend to them. It is in

the words of the Lord Jesus himself: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

That is our invitation. Come to Jesus. For after all, Christianity is not simply love and loyalty to a Church, but faith in, and love and loyalty to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

For Discussion.

1. Show that the views of the Presbyterian Church are broad.
2. Upon what important things does the Presbyterian Church insist?
3. Why should we take pride in our denomination?
4. How does she challenge us?